

Mrs. CAPPS. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. That \$6 billion, as I understand it, is in the Senate version. There is no money contemplated in terms of a cost in the House version. But in any case I do not disagree with her on this \$6 billion.

Mrs. CAPPS. We are assuming the Senate bill will have some play in the discussion that is perhaps going on in the conference committee at the moment, and that is where we would urge the attention of the conferees to be put, that there is funding that has been set aside in the Senate bill that would make quite a difference in Medicare providers being able to stay, particularly in rural areas to continue to deliver the service.

I have seen the statement of the AMA and the osteopaths on this motion to instruct, and I need to say clearly for the RECORD that these letters do not describe correctly my motion to instruct. My motion to instruct supports the AMA position on physician fees. This motion explicitly supports the provision in the House bill that provides immediate assistance to doctors. In no way does it delay or support a delay in fixing the physician fee problem. Despite what the AMA and other groups have said, this motion does not delay permanent actions on fixing the sustainable growth rate. This motion does not address a long-term fix, but neither does the House bill.

The reason the House bill does not have a long-term fix is because it is very expensive. My motion would prevent the conference from spending money on risky privatization schemes when that money should be used to help finance a long-term solution to the physician fee problem. I believe the AMA must have been reading a different motion. Their statement says we are taking money from patients to give it to physicians. It could not be further from the truth.

□ 2045

Section 231 of the Senate bill has the Federal Government paying private plans, not patients. I frankly think that patients would be better served if that money went to their own doctor than to bribe some private plan to pay for their services or to play in the field.

I am disappointed that the AMA has so inaccurately described my motion, and I hope this is an inadvertent mistake. I have work very closely with the AMA and other professional groups on the problem of physician fees; and recently I brought Tom Scully, the administrator of Medicare, to a meeting of doctors in my district. The motion I am offering today is designed to respond to the concerns that they raised in that meeting with Administrator Scully. The AMA is wrong about what my motion does, and their position does not reflect the position of doctors in my district.

In addition, I wanted to address the gentleman's comments about leaving

traditional Medicare in place. This House bill, which we have dealt with in the House before, will lead to rising Medicare part B costs because it would leave the sicker patients in traditional Medicare, while healthier seniors will go to HMOs. We have seen this in the Medicare+Choice plans, and we will certainly see it in a plan such as is proposed in this underlying bill. This is going to lead to much higher premiums for those who remain in Medicare. Seniors who do not want to join an HMO will be forced to because their premiums will be too expensive.

Mr. Speaker, this is a clear and very simple choice. On the one hand, we have HMOs and the insurance industry. On the other hand, we have the doctors who administer care, who know how to do this every day under Medicare, and their patients. The House and Senate bills seek to impose an untried and unnecessary privatization scheme onto Medicare. They will overpay HMOs in a bribe to get them to cover beneficiaries. These provisions would force seniors into private plans and drive up the premiums on those who stay in traditional Medicare. It would mean that seniors in different parts of the country would be paying different amounts for the same care. Instead of jeopardizing the Medicare system in this way, we could be ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries could see their doctors by making sure that they are reimbursed appropriately.

Support this motion to instruct to be sure that conferees support doctors over HMOs and protect our constituents from ill conceived changes.

So that is the motion to instruct conferees that we have proposed and that we hope will be passed in this House of Representatives so that the conferees will take seriously these recommendations to improve the underlying Medicare bill and make it something that could receive bipartisan support in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR IN IRAQ AND SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, since July I have come to the floor of this House night after night sharing letters from constituents and raising concerns about our policy in Iraq, raising concerns about the administration's failure to supply and to protect the troops, raising concerns about the \$1 billion a week, now an increase to \$87 billion a year for this Iraq reconstruction effort, raising concerns about the fact that there is no plan from the administration on how to deal with the problems for our troops and how to deal with an exit strategy in Iraq, letters expressing concern about the corruption in our government in Iraq where we are spending \$1 billion a week and 30 percent of that \$1 billion is going to private contractors, most of them friends of the President, Bechtel, Halliburton, other large corporations, most of them contributors to the President to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and one of them, Halliburton, particular concerns have been raised about from my constituents. Halliburton, the company that the vice President, when he was a private citizen, was CEO of, that company still pays Vice President CHENEY \$13,000 a month.

Tonight, rather than reading letters from constituents, I thought I would read something else that I think is equally interesting. It was from a book that George Bush, Sr., the first President Bush, wrote with Brent Scowcroft in 1998. The name of the book was "A World Transformed." On Page 489, the first President Bush tells us his views about Iraq and what he thought. This is President Bush the first speaking:

"Trying to eliminate Saddam" Hussein, "extending the ground war into an occupation of Iraq, would have violated our guideline about not changing objectives in midstream, engaging in 'mission creep,' and would have incurred incalculable human and political costs." This is President Bush, Sr. writing in 1998: "Apprehending him," Saddam Hussein, "was probably impossible. We had been unable to find Noriega in Panama, which we knew intimately. We would have been forced to occupy Baghdad and, in effect, rule Iraq. The coalition," President Bush wrote in 1998, "would instantly have collapsed, the Arabs deserting it in anger and other allies pulling out as well. Under those circumstances there

was no viable 'exit strategy' we could see, violating another of our principles. Furthermore, we had been self-consciously trying to set a pattern for handling aggression in the post-Cold War world. Going in and occupying Iraq, thus unilaterally exceeding the United Nations' mandate, would have destroyed the precedent of international response to aggression that we hoped to establish." President Bush the first wrote in 1998.

"Had we gone the invasion route, the United States would conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land. It would have been a dramatically different, and perhaps barren, outcome." Those are the words that President Bush, Sr. wrote only 5 years ago, 4 years before his son led an attack on Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, those letters from constituents that I have discussed night after night here were particularly compelling, especially some letters I got from the families of men and women who are serving in Iraq. And a couple of weeks ago I met in Akron, the largest city in my district, with 25 families who have loved ones in Iraq; and they talked about our failure, the Bush administration's failure, to support the troops, to supply the troops, to protect the troops: not enough safe drinking water, either bottled water or purification facilities, not enough antibiotics. Soldiers and sailors had to pay for their trips home, pay for their airfare. Some soldiers were actually charged by the hospital, had to pay the hospital for their food when they were recovering. And some soldiers, about one fourth of them, we are told, do not have the body armor which will protect their lives.

So on the one hand, these families said to me, our letters from constituents said to me, we have \$300 million a week going to private contractors to do work that is not really very well accounted for. On the other hand, we have our soldiers simply not being protected, not enough safe drinking water, not enough body armor, not enough antibiotics. And I would hope that President Bush would have listened to his father, which he clearly did not, from his father's words, but would begin to listen to some of my constituents and other constituents who beg him to focus on protecting and supplying the troops with a little less focus on all these unbid contracts and the corruption that this has brought and the waste of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that we are seeing literally every week in Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCCOTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING THE VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, next week is November 11. And often, I believe, in this Chamber we pay lip service to our veterans; and we fail to deliver on solid votes and programs that would better demonstrate our recognition of their sacrifice and service. And this year, unfortunately with the budget and the appropriations passed, is no exception.

I was astonished earlier today when a colleague from the Republican majority stood up to pretend to document how great things are for our veterans, all these new services and things we are providing. I am hearing a very different assessment from my veterans and their dependents. And facts are stubborn things.

Here are some real facts, unlike what we heard earlier today: 150,000 veterans are waiting 6 months or longer for appointments; 14,000 veterans have been waiting 15 months or longer for their "expedited" disability claims; 560,000 disabled veterans are subject to the disabled veterans tax, something we have tried to rectify.

We have 373 cosponsors. There are only 435 people here. If 373 people want something, we should be able to do it, should we not? That is a super, super, super majority. But guess what. The Republican leadership, under urging from the President and Secretary Rumsfeld and threats of veto from the President, are refusing to bring up a repeal of the disabled veterans tax.

We can have tax breaks for people who do not work for a living, the investor class. We can have tax breaks for whole hosts of people and things. But we cannot have tax relief for disabled veterans. Is that not extraordinary? President Bush refused to spend \$275 million in emergency money for veterans health care provided by Congress in the fiscal year 2002 supplemental appropriations bill. But of course he wants to do everything he can to recognize the service of our veterans and our young men and women.

January 8 of this year, the Bush administration cut off VA health care for 164,000 veterans. They put them in a new category called Category 8. They are wealthy veterans just like the wealthy people they are giving tax breaks to. Well, not quite. The wealthy people the Bush administration is raining tax breaks on earn over \$311,000 a year. But these vets are wealthy. They do not deserve that veterans health care, according to the Bush administration. They earn \$25,000 a year. They should pay for their own health care.

The President's budget also proposed doubling the prescription drug copayment from \$7 to \$15 for veterans, the ones who are still able to qualify, and a \$250 enrollment fee on another category, Category 7 and 8. These could be people with low incomes, distinguished

service, but under the Bush administration, we just cannot quite afford to give them the service we promised when they enlisted.

Now we either believe in the all-volunteer military or we do not. And we are either going to recognize the sacrifice and service of veterans or we will not. And if we do not, probably the next generation is not going to want to enlist for what is a very tough and today very bloody and dangerous job because they are not quite sure of the promise that we will take care of them and we will take care of their families and their dependents.

A few other problems. Rather than funding the VA, the Bush administration sent a memo to regional VA facilities that forbid Veterans Administration employees from proactively informing veterans about the services available to them in order to reduce the number of veterans using VA facilities.

□ 2100

That is supportive. Is that not great?

In March, House Republicans voted in favor of their budget resolution that cut \$14 billion, "B" billion dollars, from mandatory veterans benefits over 10 years, including veterans pensions, education and other benefits. That was an hour after we voted to support the troops in Iraq.

Maybe it would have been a better message if we just had not bothered with the words, but had duly voted for the money. But, no, the Republican majority, pushed by President Bush, could not vote for that money, and that budget passed by one vote.

The House Republican budget resolution also cut \$14 billion from veterans health care and other discretionary veterans programs. The Republican budget also included the President's proposal to impose a \$250 enrollment fee on our veterans for the free health care that they were promised.

The Republican budget also included the President's proposal to double the prescription drug copayment from \$7 to \$15. The President had already raised it from \$2 to \$7, but, hey, we need money. We have got to send a lot of money over to Iraq, and we cannot ask them to pay any of it back, so we have to double the prescription drug benefit fee for our veterans.

Now, the House VA-HUD appropriations bill funded VA at the level requested by the President, which was \$1.8 billion below the House Republicans' own budget, and it was \$3.3 billion below the level requested by national veterans organizations in their independent budget proposal.

Let us really celebrate Veterans' Day, and give them the services they earned and need, and pay for them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.